

**CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION OF FRESNO COUNTY**

***Regular Meeting  
August 1, 2001 - 3:00 p.m.***

***Children & Families Commission Offices  
University of California Building  
550 E. Shaw, Suite 215  
Fresno, CA***

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1**

**Recommendations:**

Approve Commission Minutes – July 11, 2001 Regular Meeting

**MINUTES OF THE JULY 11, 2001 MEETING**

**Present:** Vice Chair Luisa Medina, Secretary/Treasurer Gary Carozza, Commissioners Marion Karian, Roseanne Lascano, Kathleen McIntyre, LeeAnn Parry, Executive Director Steve Gordon

**Absent:** Commissioners Oscar Sablan and Bob Waterston (both excused)

Commissioner Medina called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. She stated that when Commissioner Lascano arrived, a quorum would be established. Until Commissioner Lascano's arrival, Commissioner Medina proceeded with agenda items that did not require a quorum.

**1. Presentation on "Achieving School Readiness"**

Commissioner Medina introduced Dr. Jane E. Henderson, the Executive Director of the California Children and Families Commission. Dr. Henderson highlighted some of the major activities of the State Commission and the emerging issues and research on which they are working.

In distinguishing the role of the State Commission vs. the County Commissions, the State Commission developed a framework of objectives in five basic areas designed to achieve broad systemic change:

1. Changing Public Awareness (Public education and media outreach)
2. Improving Quality and Accessibility of Programs (Statewide capacity and infrastructure development)
3. Improving the Quality and Accessibility of Programs (Innovative approaches, partnerships and demonstrations, pilot programs)
4. Evaluating for Results (Research and evaluation)
5. Improving Public Policy (public policy development and advocacy)

She highlighted specifics under each area:

To inform the public of importance of the early years and the importance of avoiding tobacco during pregnancy and around young children, the State Commission has allocated \$90 million, over 3-years, for a paid media campaign (radio, print and TV). An additional \$36 million, 3-year public relations contract has been awarded to work closely with county commissions on a variety of strategies in engaging the community and letting people know about services available in the community, especially

those which are Prop. 10 funded. One of the special features of the program is that the PR firm will be working with counties on a regional basis, with a consultant available to work with individual county commissions in the area. Very specific, community based outreach strategies will be designed with local community-based organizations. The new parent kit (containing 5 videos on various aspects of child development from birth-5) will be launched in September.

Investment in a number of training strategies for childcare providers to increase capacity will be continued, as well as compensation of child care providers and other professionals. Funding has been designated for training physicians to enhance their anti-tobacco messages with pregnant women and mothers of young children. The State Commission is participating in the development of the Legislature's Master Plan for Public Education, a 20-year master plan. The Joint Legislative Task Force recognizes, from input at public hearings, that in order to devise and form a master plan for K-12, they could not do so without paying attention to early childhood development.

The State Commission is providing technical assistance on best and emerging practices to county commissions, with some programs specifically targeted at the broadly defined issue of school readiness.

The area of improving programs through innovative approaches, demonstrations, pilot projects, partnerships, etc., is the area of work that is of the utmost importance over the next five to 10 years. This includes the School Readiness Initiative, and getting the Governor's buy in so that this issue will receive general fund dollar allocations in the state budget in the future. Gov. Davis has appointed a School Readiness Task Force, co-chaired by Kerry Mazzoni and Rob Reiner. The Task Force will develop the school readiness Initiative, partnering closely with the county commissions to determine what the initiative will look like. The State Commission has allocated \$200 million, over 5 years, in matching funds to participate with county commissions who develop school readiness programs in the communities where the kids are among the very neediest and lowest performing. Communities served by schools that are in the bottom 30% percentile as determined by standardized test scores are being targeted. The types of programs which are being sought are programs which bring together the kinds of family, school, community support and services that are predictive of children doing well in school and later in life, which include high quality child care development programs, family support (parent education, family resource centers, home visitations, family literacy programs, etc.), other health and social service programs, and the infrastructure commitment and funding to keep everything together.

The State Commission is very fortunate to have funding available for research projects (rare for a state agency). Obtaining baseline data on where children are as they enter school is one area of research. A public opinion poll will be conducted that will tell us what the public and policy makers know about the importance of the early years in children's lives and what they think about current levels of funding, the additional investment needed in early childhood education, and the appropriate role(s) of government, communities and families are, etc. in children's lives, so that we know how far we have to go in actually changing public awareness.

The State Commission will work with county commissions and public to improve public policy through policy development and advocacy. The evaluation element will include developing a school readiness assessment tool. The development of readiness assessment for children to receive through the public health community is one avenue that could possibly be pursued. The issue of early identification for special needs is of importance.

Getting the governor and legislature on board in terms of the master plan and continued funding, working with the Prop. 10 county commissions, working through community based outreach programs, refining our statutes if needed (more importantly refining state and federal statutes), launch of a newsletter addressing these issues (to be distributed to local policy makers, members of the legislature, elected officials, school board members, advocacy organizations, etc.).

The overarching objective adopted by the State Commission is that "all young children will reach age five healthy, learning and ready to achieve their greatest potential in school". The concept of "school readiness" has become the major focus of the State Commission's work over the last year.

The State Commission has adopted the National Education Goals Panel definition of "School Readiness", which includes more than just academic readiness. A child's physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge are equally important to success in school.

Other components of school readiness, according to the National Education Goals Panel, are the "readiness" of schools to receive children and family and community support services which contribute to children's readiness for school.

The approach to School Readiness that the State Commission is advocating will build on public awareness, improving public policy, and brings the community, family and child together to support social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

Commissioner Parry inquired how the school readiness initiative will address the education goals at the elementary level in relation to pre-school. Dr. Henderson responded that since Prop. 10's mandate is to work with children under age 5, dealing with this issue is hard. Through the master plan effort, the commission is working with other groups to ensure that what we recommend for school readiness at the pre-K level are woven through all the strategies, including financing, professional development, and facilities.

Commissioner Carozza asked about the possible redirection of any savings realized from the research findings that will be forthcoming from the commission's efforts. Dr. Henderson said that first we must demonstrate that there are cost-benefits (but not necessarily cost savings) to improving school readiness through the research.

Commissioner McIntyre asked for more clarification on the New Parent Kit. Dr. Henderson explained its' contents (5 videos: health & nutrition, safety, importance of the early childhood years, literacy, and choosing quality childcare; plus brochures that can be augmented with local information, guide for new parents) and that it initially will be available in English and Spanish, with hopes of also providing it in other languages in the future. Camera-ready materials will be available for county commissions to utilize locally. The initial goal is to provide the kit to parents of all newborns in the state; market testing has shown that the kit also is of value to day care providers, public health provider and other professionals.

Commissioner Medina asked about the \$200M initiative for school readiness. Dr. Henderson said that, in working with the county commissions, what they are proposing is a multi-tiered program, with a certain number of counties ready to identify a limited number of programs that are currently underway or ready to go, which will be selected and funded this summer with implementation in the fall. The next big round which will allow a year of planning time, with selections made a year from now (July 2002). If there is money left, the remainder will be targeted to the remaining low performing areas in counties that might need more than a year of preparation and planning for programs. Director Gordon stated that Fresno ranks 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> for the largest amount of money because of the lowest performing schools, which translates into approximately \$7 million for the county; he will be bring back some proposals to the Commission to match those funds.

Medina also asked about the public relations consultant for the central valley region. Dr. Henderson responded that consultants are currently being hired and they should be in place by mid-summer. Director Gordon stated that the contract for the central valley was awarded to Rogers & Company and they have been very good about coordinating with the counties in the region.

Vicki Hoyle, Fresno EOC, asked about what public policies had been identified for change and if there was a system in place to network and link with those early child care groups that have identified policies that need to change. Dr. Henderson stated that the two major efforts we have going to identify the policy changes are through the master plan working group and a project at Sonoma State University to look at recommendations for policy change and activities for the State Commission, particularly around issues of children with disabilities and other special needs. An advisory committee on diversity has been established to look at policy changes and the changing needs of a diverse California population.

Javier Guzman, Proteus, Inc., asked how one could become eligible for Tier 1 funds for the school readiness initiative. Dr. Henderson said the county commissions will make that determination of which communities and programs can meet the criteria that are specified in the application process, hopefully with the funding available on a non-competitive basis, but based strictly on low performing schools.

A quorum was established with the arrival of Commissioner Lascano.

## **2. Discuss and Approve FY 2001-2002 Budget**

Director Gordon presented a recap of the FY2000-01 budget and an overview of the proposed FY 2001-2002 budget. He highlighted the FY2000-01 funds expended and encumbered for major grants as follows:

Major Grants (Rounds 1 and 2)	\$19 million total (approximate)
Set aside for leveraging State Department of Education dollars	\$4 million
Training and retention	\$2 million
Funding of the mini-grant program	\$174,000
Total (approximate)	\$25 million total

Evaluation Contract	\$700,000
Administration / Overhead	\$550,000
Reserves	\$1,000,000

<b>Total FY00-01 Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$27.2 million (approx.)</b>
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Revenue:

Beginning Balance (audited)	\$21.1 million
Anticipated FY00-01 Revenues	\$11.2 million
Interest Income	\$1.5 million
<b>Projected Revenue:</b>	<b>\$34 million</b>

<b>Surplus (Revenue over Expense)</b>	<b>\$6.8 million</b>
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The original budget revenue projection was for \$14 million, but actual revenues will be only approximately \$11.2 million, due to several factors including an overall decrease in tax revenue received, the Prop. 99 backfill, and overestimation in the state budget.

This leaves an approximate \$6.8 million for carryover from FY00-01. Director Gordon recommends that this surplus be put in a "children's sustainability fund" for the future, and not be carried forward for expenditure in the FY 2001-02 budget.

**FY2001-2002 budget:**

Revenue,	
New tax revenue	\$10.5 million (6% decrease in revenue over FY00-01),
Interest Income	\$250,000 (conservative estimate; probably higher)
Carryover from FY00-01	\$6.8 million*
<b>Total Anticipated Revenue:</b>	<b>\$17.55 million</b>

Expenses:	
Administration	\$821,000 (approximately 8% of total budget),
Evaluation contracts	\$1 million
Program Grants	\$9.25 million
Children's Sustainability Fund	\$6.48 million
<b>Total Anticipated Expense:</b>	<b>\$17.55 million</b>

Director Gordon pointed out that the \$9.25 million in grants is not earmarked for specific programs at this time since the strategic plan, which will drive the spending, is currently being revised. This leaves \$6.5 million for a permanent sustainability fund. Proposed revisions to the strategic plan will be presented at the August meeting.

Director Gordon said he has been approached by several financial institutions about investment of the sustainability funds, which are now in the county trust fund. He plans to ask these institutions to present to the Commission plans on what they would do with these funds, how safe the monies would be that they invest for us and what kind of interest rates they could provide. How this information compares to what the county trust fund can do, particularly interest rate and safety of investment, will be put into a plan for the Commission. If we decide that we want to have \$10 million annually to provide for programs, then how can we sustain that level of income considering we would anticipate a 3% per year decrease in revenues and 3% per year increase in cost of living, etc.

Commissioner Lascano asked if the Commission has an investment policy and/or if one is needed. Director Gordon said that we do not have one, since the money has been in the County treasury and we have been utilizing the County of Fresno policy. On a question from Commissioner Carozza, Counsel Perez stated that general statutes covered the "prudent investor" policy.

Commissioner Carozza (McIntyre second) moved that the FY2001-2002 budget be approved with the proviso that a comparison of FY00-01 actuals vs. FY01-02 proposed budget be provided, that a cash flow analysis be completed by staff, and that a final budget be drawn based on audit actuals. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Approve Commission Minutes – June 20, 2001**

Commissioner Carozza moved (Lascano second) to approve the June 20, 2001 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. Approve amendment to Commission Minutes – June 6, 2001**

Commissioner Carozza moved (Lascano second) to approve the June 6, 2001 minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**5. Update on Round 2 RFP**

Director Gordon stated 52 proposals were received timely; 12 were returned after initial staff review because of incompleteness of the application. Forty proposals were sent to a cadre of professional readers set up by the technical assistance group in Sacramento. Their evaluations are due back July

20, after which time staff and the two team leaders for the readers will conduct oral interviews as necessary and recommendations for funding will be brought to the Commission for approval at the September Commission meeting.

#### **6. Presentation of Fresno County Children & Families Commission Website**

Director Gordon introduced Evaluation Analyst Carmen T. Mendoza who directed Commissioners to the information included in their packets on the website. She stated the site would be functional next Monday, July 16, at the URL of [www.cafc.ca.gov/fresno](http://www.cafc.ca.gov/fresno). She offered to do a walk-through demonstration of the site after the meeting adjourned.

**Adjournment:** Commissioner Medina adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.